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## ROBERT ANDERSON TO E. B. WASHBURN.

TOURS, FRANCE, May 10, 1870.

TO E. B. WASHBURN,  
Envoy Extraordinary, and  
Minister Plenipotentiary of  
The United States of America,  
Paris, France.

MY DEAR SIR:

After our recent conversation about the Black Hawk War, you asked me to put my recollections of some of the incidents connected therewith in writing, and you were kind enough to suggest that my reminiscences would be of much interest to many of the old settlers in your adopted State. I should state, however, that my memory has been a good deal impaired, and that, therefore, many allowances must be made.

When the Indian disturbances under Black Hawk broke out in the spring of 1832, I was on duty at the St. Louis Arsenal, which was then under the command of Lieutenant Robert Bland Lee. I may here say that I graduated at the West Point Military Academy in 1825. When the hostilities commenced, General Atkinson was in command of Jefferson Barracks, and he was put in command of the expedition to suppress them. He proceeded at once to Fort Armstrong, on Rock Island. Having obtained the consent of my commanding officer, I volunteered to join his expedition, which I did at Rock Island. He immediately assigned me to duty as Assistant Inspector General on his staff. Many volunteers had gathered at Rock Island. Governor John Reynolds, of Illinois, soon arrived and took up his quarters with General Atkinson, and he remained with us nearly all the time till the close of the war.

After a considerable augmentation of the troops at Rock Island, we moved our forces up Rock River in keel boats, as far as Dixon's Ferry, so called after Captain Dixon, the first settler there. We made that place the general rendezvous of all the troops coming in. The cavalry had a camp on the south side of the river, and the infantry were in an intrenched camp on

the north side. The officers in command of the Illinois troops were General Henry, and General Posey, and another General whose name at this moment has escaped me; but General Atkinson was in command of the expedition. The force remained at Dixon's Ferry some two or three months, drilling and making some small expeditions.

We had a force of some fifteen hundred cavalry, the finest troops I ever saw. While at Dixon's Ferry, we were joined by a body of friendly Indians, headed by the Chief Chebansse, (I may not spell the name correctly). It was during this time that I went on an expedition to Ottawa with General Atkinson. It was then a small trading post, with only a few houses. We found one company of troops there whose term of service had expired. I mustered it out of service, but most of the men immediately re-inlisted, and I had the satisfaction of mustering them in again. Henry Dodge, afterward so well known, and so much distinguished as Colonel of Regiment of Rangers, authorized to be raised by Congress, was with us, and also Boon and Ford as Captains in the same regiment. Boon was a son of the celebrated Daniel Boon. I also mustered Abraham Lincoln twice into the service, and once out. He was a member of two of the independent companies which were not brigaded. The first time I mustered him into the service was at the mouth of Fox River, May 29, 1832, in Captain Elijah Iker (Iles) company. The Lieutenants in the company were J. M. Harriman and H. B. Roberts. The value of his arms was forty dollars, and his horse and equipments one hundred and twenty dollars. I mustered him out of the service at the "Rapids of the Illinois," June 16, 1832, and in four days afterwards at the same place, I mustered him into service again in Captain Jacob Early's company. The Lieutenants in this last company were G. W. Glasscock and B. D. Rush. Of course I had no recollection of Mr. Lincoln, but when President he reminded me of the fact.

I might mention that previous to this time, Governor Reynolds gave me a commission of Inspector General in the Illinois volunteer service, with the rank of Colonel. I now

have in my possession at home, that commission as an officer in the service of that State, now become so great and powerful. I recollect the fight at "Stillman's Run," some twenty miles above Dixon's Ferry, in which Colonel Strode, of one of the Illinois regiments, figured quite conspicuously. Among the officers who were with us at Dixon's Ferry, there were several who afterward became distinguished. There was Captain, afterward General Riley, distinguished in Mexico and California, and Lieutenant Albert Sydney Johnston, Aid and Assistant Adjutant General on General Atkinson's Staff, afterward so well known as a General in the rebel service, and who was killed at Shiloh. He was a cool, clear-headed man, and an excellent officer. Indeed, I have always considered him the ablest officer the rebels ever had in their service. Captain William S. Harney, (now General Harney), of the 1st Infantry, was also with us, a bold dashing officer, indefatigable in duty. So was also Captain William Graham, of the regular army, afterward Lieutenant Colonel, and killed at the battle of Molino del Rey.

The names of the members of General Atkinson's Staff, as nearly as I can recall them, were:

Lieutenant A. S. Johnston, A. D. C. Assistant Adjutant General, Lieutenant M. L. Clark (son of General William Clark, Governor of Missouri, who went with Lewis to explore the Rocky Mountains), A. D. C; Lieutenant Robert Anderson, Assistant Inspector General; Lieutenant W. Wheelwright, Ordnance Officer; Lieutenant N. J. Eaton, Chief Commissary Department; Colonel Enoch March, Quartermaster General.

The last named gentleman, was I think, the Quartermaster of the State of Illinois, and an extraordinary man, fertile in resources, prompt in deciding as well as acting. He was of inestimable service to us during the campaign.

General Reynolds was accompanied, if my memory serves me, by the Adjutant General of his State, General Turney. In every brigade there was a spy battalion. Captain Early was, in addition to those named to you, Captain of one of those companies.

William S. Hamilton, son of Alexander Hamilton, joined us at Dixon's Ferry, with a small party of friendly Indians. He was of much use to us from his knowledge of the Indian character and of the country.

The first movement of our troops was up Rock River and with a view of finding the Indians and giving them battle. My duty was to be in the advance, and select camping grounds for the troops. I was a great deal with the "Spy Battalion," commanded by Major W. L. D. Ewing of Vandalia, a brave and efficient officer. Jacob Fry was Colonel of the regiments in Henry's brigade, an excellent officer and an honest man.

Sidney Breese, since so distinguished in your State, was one of the Lieutenant Colonels. The country through which we passed (it was in July), was beautiful beyond description, surpassing everything I have ever seen in our own country, in Mexico or in Europe. The Indians constantly retreated as we advanced. Finally they struck west to cross the Mississippi River. We overtook them at "Bad Axe," on the bank of the river, on the 2d of August, 1832, just as they were making arrangements to cross, and there was fought the battle of Bad Axe, which ended in the complete rout of the Indians. It was a fight in the ravines, on the bottom land, and among logs and trees and underbrush. Black Hawk escaped, but was captured some time afterward, and taken to Fort Crawford and surrendered to Colonel Zachary Taylor, who was then in command of that post. The battle of Bad Axe having virtually ended the war, the troops were moved back to Dixon's Ferry and Rock Island, at which place I mustered them out of the service. General Scott was sent out to supersede General Atkinson, and take command of the expedition, but he did not reach the theatre of operations before the close of the war. He got down as far as Galena and from there he went to Fort Armstrong, where he established his headquarters. From Dixon's Ferry I was sent by General Atkinson with dispatches for General Scott at Rock Island, and to report to him for duty. He at once assigned me to duty, placing me in charge of the Indian prisoners. I have the record of the names of all these prisoners

among my papers. I have also among my papers in New York, all the original muster rolls of the Illinois troops, and I will take great pleasure in putting them at your disposal to be placed at your discretion among the archives of the State, or of some historical society in the State. This should be done with the approbation of the War Department.

General Scott having received information from Colonel Taylor of the capture of Black Hawk and a few of his chiefs, he detailed me with a guard to go to Fort Crawford for them, and to bring them to Fort Armstrong. We took for that purpose the steamboat *Warrior*, Captain Throckmorton. We left Rock Island early in the day, and before night there was indications of cholera among the soldiers on board the boat. There was no surgeon on board, and I did the best I could for them. When we arrived at the mouth of Fevre River, I had the boat tied up and took a skiff and went up to Galena in search of a doctor. I there found Dr. Addison Phileo who had been with us in the campaign, and he cheerfully returned with me to the steamboat, and took charge of my sick. We then continued our trip to Fort Crawford, where I delivered my orders to Colonel Taylor. By this time I had the cholera myself, and was scarcely fit for duty. Colonel Taylor, therefore, assigned to me for my assistance in returning with the Indians to Fort Armstrong, his Adjutant, Lieutenant Jefferson Davis. We took with us Black Hawk, his two sons, the Prophet and some other chiefs.

On reaching Fort Armstrong, the cholera was raging so violently in camp, that General Scott ordered the steamer to go immediately to Jefferson Barracks. I there turned my prisoners over to General Atkinson, who had resumed command of the post. I then resumed my original position at the St. Louis Arsenal, the temporary command of which post devolved on me some months afterwards.

Such, my dear sir, are some of my recollections of the "Black Hawk War," which created a great deal of excitement in the Northwest, and which was a great event in its day. It was my first service in the field, and I entered into it with all the zeal of a young officer who loved his profession and desired

faithfully to serve his country. I have retained many pleasant memories of the officers and soldiers with whom I was associated. There were never finer troops than the Illinois volunteer soldiers that we had with us. They were brave, intelligent and sober men, and always yielding a ready obedience to the commands of their officers. Many of them, both officers and privates, have since reached high positions in public life, and have reflected great credit, not only upon the State, but upon the Nation.

I have the honor to be, very truly

Your obedient servant,

ROBERT ANDERSON.

GENERAL VALE:

"In this simple narrative, this plain unvarnished tale, we read the character of Robert Anderson at a glance, and what a picture it presents of remarkable historic personalities. Such a grouping of individuals may never again be possible. In the foreground is the Hon. E. B. Washburne, Minister to France, during the most desperate hour of her existence, when Paris seemed to be one vast mad-house, and to the American Minister fell the task of protecting the lives of thousands, not only his own countrymen, who felt themselves safe only beneath the folds of the Stars and Stripes. Calm and dispassionate amid a fearful tumult he earned the grateful thanks of all the Nations for his courage and wise discretion, and here also we see the tall form of General Scott, Commander-in-Chief of the Army, still suffering from his wounds at Chippewa, and yet to be the conqueror of Mexico, and Lundys Lane, and Zachary Taylor, "Old Rough and Ready" to be in after years the hero of Buena Vista and the President of the United States, and Colonel Bennett Riley, to be the hero of Cerro Gordo, and General Atkinson, the successful hero of the battle which is described, and Lieutenant Albert Sydney Johnston of Kentucky, Chief of Staff to General Atkinson, whose heroic life and achievements would fill a volume. Commander of the Army in Texas in the War of the Revolution, Commander of gallant regiment in the war with

Mexico, successful commander of the expedition against the Mormons in Utah, and commander of the Confederate Army at Shiloh, that defeated the Union Army in the first day's battle, where he was mortally wounded. Captain William S. Harney, afterwards General Harney, of Mexican fame, and a celebrated Indian fighter; and there was Sidney Breese, an eminent citizen, afterwards United States Senator from Illinois; and those other three, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, JEFFERSON DAVIS, and ROBERT ANDERSON."